

*Scotland County Board of Commissioners reconvened meeting
1 p.m. May 10, 2005, Commissioners Chamber, 1405 West Boulevard, Laurinburg*

MINUTES

**Scotland County Board of Commissioners
Reconvened Meeting, May 10, 2005
Scotland County Complex, 1405 West Boulevard, Laurinburg, NC**

At 1 p.m., Chairman J.D. Willis reconvened the recessed meeting. Commissioners in attendance: Chairman Willis, Vice Chair Betty Blue Gholston and Commissioners Leon Butler, Charles "Scoofer" Jordan, Joyce McDow and Clarence McPhatter. Commissioners not in attendance: Commissioner John Alford. Staff in attendance: Finance Officer/Assistant County Manager Kevin Patterson, County Attorney Ed Johnston, Personnel Administrator Susan Butler, Finance Technician Anne Tindall and Clerk to the Board Ann W. Kurtzman. Chairman Willis delivered the opening prayer.

Health insurance carriers report

Mr. Patterson said there would be a 12.7 percent increase with current carrier BCBS. He said the cost of the FirstCarolinaCare proposal would keep costs almost flat. Mr. Patterson said the tradeoff would be that BCBS has a much larger network while the FCC network is much smaller.

Ms. Butler discussed employee input on both plans, particularly from those who reside outside of Scotland County who might be more affected by a change in health plans. She also polled employees currently being treated at Duke, which is not in the FCC network. She said most of the employees who are Duke patients said a change in health care provider would cause financial and/or emotional hardship.

Mr. John Crumpton and Ms. Kim Kilday, NCACC marketing representatives, discussed the pluses of staying with BCBS through the NCACC health provider pool.

Mr. Ken Lewis and Ms. Jill Emerson discussed the strengths of FCC as a health care provider.

The following FCC brokers made presentations: Wade S. Dunbar Agency, Mac McIntyre Insurance and The Ficklin Company.

Mr. Patterson discussed the difference between a self-funded Worker's Compensation Plan and Worker's Compensation through a pool with NCACC.

Ms. Linda Justice of Compensation Claims Solution discussed the benefits of the self-funded plan. Mr. Crumpton and Ms. Kilday discussed the benefits of the NCACC pool.

(A break was called. Meeting resumed at 2:35 p.m.)

Vice Chair Gholston said of the health care providers that she believed the Commissioners should consider going with FirstCarolinaCare since its health plan proposal represented a \$167,000 savings to the County. She said it is important to reduce the deficit and the County owes that to the taxpayers.

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Motion was made by Commissioner McDow and duly seconded by Vice Chair Gholston to approve FirstCarolinaCare as the health provider for the County employees. Vote: For: Chairman Willis, Vice Chair Gholston and Commissioners Butler, Jordan and McDow. Vote: Opposed: Commissioner McPhatter. Vote: Motion approved.

Motion was made by Chairman Willis and duly seconded by Commissioner McDow to approve The Ficklin Company as the agent representing FirstCarolinaCare. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Motion was made by Chairman Willis and duly seconded by Commissioner Jordan to stay with the Worker's Compensation pool through the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Review DSS Staffing Needs

DSS Director Jan Elliott provided the Commissioners with a list of DSS vacant positions as of May 10, 2005 and an accounting of DSS staffing patterns. She reviewed the caseloads by unit. She said the income maintenance workers have an average caseload of 443. It would be 397 cases if Assistance were fully staffed. She also discussed the need for a Personnel Assistant and for a Social Worker Program Manager, a position, if filled, would receive a salary less than that of the predecessor.

She said the Child Support Agent and Accelerated Academy Social Worker are not County funded. Ms. Elliott said the estimated cost to the County, which is already budgeted in FY 2004-2005 and proposed for FY 2005-2006, would be \$81,947. She said the request for the seven positions is not a request for more staff rather, it is but a request to fill recently vacated position.

Ms. Elliott defended the need to fill the seven positions due to State program changes and an increased number of people being processed through DSS because they are unemployed.

Ms. Elliott requested the Commissioners also consider approving reclassifying a Community Social Services Assistant to Income Maintenance Caseworker II at an estimated County cost of \$17,898.

Motion was made by Commissioner Jordan and duly seconded by Commissioner Butler to authorize recruitment of three Income Maintenance Caseworkers, one Personnel Assistant, one Social Worker Program Manager, on Child Support Agent II, one Social Worker II and reclassify the Community Services Assistant to Income Maintenance Caseworker. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Review Governor's Highway Safety Program

Sheriff Buddy Blalock said the two additional deputies brought to the department through the Governor's Highway Safety Program resulted in an improved sharing of the workload and less overtime expenditures. He said the two fully equipped vehicles provided through the program saved the County that expenditure, too. He said the two additional cars increase the presence of

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the Sheriff's Department in the County, particularly in Laurel Hill, an area not as regularly patrolled previously.

The Sheriff said his department also saved the County \$100,000 through its meal contract for inmates at the Jail and by developing an agreement with judges that helped reduce the jail population to below 100. As a result, Sheriff Blalock said, the mandate by the State to hire two more jailors was lifted.

Sheriff Blalock suggested the Department paid for the two Governor's Highway Safety Program deputies through savings realized in the abovementioned areas. He said salaries for the two deputies, once the Program grant money is exhausted, would cost the County about \$80,000 a year.

Vice Chair Gholston, commenting on the five new cars budgeted in the Sheriff's Department each year, asked if the Department could give up two cars in the rotation in order to save the County money.

Sheriff Blalock said it could be done although it would catch up with the County in the increased cost of maintenance to the existing vehicles.

Sheriff Blalock said salaries for the two deputies are funded through September 30, 2005. He asked the Commissioners to consider continuance of funding the two deputy positions in FY 2005-2006.

Review Draft Resolution and Letter for the School Board

Attorney Johnston discussed the draft letter and resolution asking the Board of Education to consider a deviation in funding from that required by Section 9.2 of Chapter 66 of the Session Laws of 2002. Mr. Johnston said, as requested by the governing body, the resolution requests a deviation downward by \$401,000.

The Commissioners discussed in general exactly how much of a downward deviation be requested and whether it be based on cost of living increases for school employees paid by local funding or the amount it would take to maintain the tax rate at \$1.10.

The Commissioners discussed subtracting the savings through changing health plans from the projected \$498,000, the amount it would take to balance the budget.

Finance Officer/Assistant County Manager Patterson suggested that \$162,000 be subtracted from \$498,000 keeping in mind that budgetary projections still remain.

Consensus of the Board was to request a deviation in the amount of \$336,000.

Motion was made by Commissioner Butler and duly seconded by Vice Chair Gholston to approve the letter to the Board of Education and the Resolution requesting a deviation in funding by \$336,000 from that required by Section 9.2 of Chapter 66 of the Session Laws of 2002. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

**A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE SCOTLAND COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVE A DEVIATION IN FUNDING FROM THAT
REQUIRED BY SECTION 9.2 OF CHAPTER 66 OF THE SESSION LAWS OF 2002**

WHEREAS, the level of funding for current expense expenditures from local funds for the Scotland County Schools for fiscal year 2005-2006 is determined pursuant to Section 9.2 of Chapter 66 of the Session Laws of 2002; and

WHEREAS, the projected funding level for fiscal year 2005-2006 is \$9,386,584.00, which is an increase of \$178,287.00 over such funding for fiscal year 2004-2005; and

WHEREAS, Section 9.3 of Chapter 66 of the Session Laws of 2002 provides that the Scotland County Board of Commissioners and the Scotland County Board of Education may, in extraordinary economic circumstances, jointly set a level of current expense expenditures for a fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the Scotland County Board of Commissioners is of the opinion that such extraordinary economic circumstances exist as would justify a deviation as contemplated herein for fiscal year 2005-2006; and

WHEREAS, a substantial number of local industries have closed, relocated or filed bankruptcy resulting in significant loss of jobs and reduction of the ad valorem tax base; and

WHEREAS, one third of the population of Scotland County now qualifies for Medicaid; and

WHEREAS, fully funding all budget requests from County agencies, departments and offices would have resulted in an ad valorem tax rate for fiscal year 2005-2006 of \$1.18 per \$100.00 valuation; and

WHEREAS, the Scotland County Board of Commissioners has required all other entities submitting budget requests to reduce their requests (including even those providing essential services such as the Emergency Medical Service) in order to help achieve the goal of no ad valorem tax increase; and

WHEREAS, increases in two mandated components of the budget, local current expense funding for the County Schools (increase of \$178,287.00) and Medicaid (increase of \$800,000.00), threaten to force an ad valorem tax increase; and

WHEREAS, according to the Legislative Bulletin of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners the budget as proposed by the Senate of the North Carolina General Assembly contains no provision for relief for counties faced with increased Medicaid responsibilities; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Scotland County Board of Commissioners respectfully requests the Scotland County Board of Education to approve a resolution authorizing a deviation from

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the funding level for current expense expenditures from local funds for the Scotland County Schools for fiscal year 2005-2006.

2. The Scotland County Board of Commissioners requests the level of such funding for fiscal year 2005-2006 be reduced from \$9,386,584.00 to \$9,050,584.00, due to extraordinary economic circumstances.

Adopted by unanimous vote of the Scotland County Board of Commissioners this the 10th day of May 2005.

Chairman Willis excused Attorney Johnston and Clerk to the Board Ann Kurtzman from the meeting so the letter and resolution could be prepared for signatures and immediate hand delivery to Superintendent Shirley Prince and all members of the Board of Education.

Finance Technician Anne Tindall recorded the minutes for the remainder of the meeting.

Budget Work Session/Commissioner Review/Questions

Chairman Willis suggested that African American Heritage Committee, Historic Properties and Literacy Council be put in the budget pending further review and a final decision.

The Commissioners scheduled 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 1, 2005 in the Commissioners Chamber as submission by the Budget Officer of the proposed FY 2005-2006 Budget.

Commissioner Jordan said a PowerPoint presentation should be provided explaining to the public the County's current economic plight and the reason the governing board is making the request of the Board of Education.

Chairman Willis said information would be gathered and available for review by all the Commissioners a week in advance of the June 14, 2005 regular meeting.

Other Information

Mr. Patterson said attorneys have expressed concern about delays on map approvals. Mr. Patterson discussed several options for minimizing the delays.

The Commissioners agreed that map approvals should be turned over to Inspections while County Engineer Jim Blackwell oversees landfill operations. The Board discussed the possibility of placing Planning and Zoning with Inspections on a permanent basis or temporarily until the landfill is transitioned to a new Solid Waste Supervisor.

Consensus of the Board was to integrate Planning and Zoning services with Inspections.

Budget Amendments

Mr. Patterson asked the Commissioners to consider approval of a DSS budget amendment for additional State funds in the amount of \$15,395.

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Motion was made by Commissioner Jordan and duly seconded by Commissioner McDow to approve \$15,395 in additional funding for DSS, and authorize the Finance Officer to make necessary budget arrangements to receive and expend this money. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Patterson asked the Commissioners to consider approval additional funding for Scots for Youth in the amount of \$18,500. There are no County dollars involved.

Motion was made by Commissioner McDow and duly seconded by Commissioner Butler to approve \$18,500 for Scots for Youth, and authorize the Finance Officer to make necessary budget arrangements to receive and expend this money. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Patterson asked the Commissioners to consider approval of a budget amendment transferring \$2,250 from Fund Balance to the Medical Examiner line item.

Motion was made by Commissioner Jordan and duly seconded by Vice Chair Gholston to approve the transfer of \$2,250 from Fund Balance to the Medical Examiner line item, and authorize the Finance Officer to make necessary budget arrangements to receive and expend this money. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Commissioner Butler discussed the citizen efforts to establish a free health clinic in the County. The clinic would more than likely be housed in a mobile unit, but a location for the unit has not yet been sited. Commissioner Butler said locating the unit near the Health Department was discussed.

Chairman Willis suggested representatives from the group provide the Board of Commissioners with more information and any requests.

Mr. Patterson said five County Manager candidates were contacted via letter, and one of the five has found another position. The Commissioners agreed an invitation for an interview should be sent to the sixth candidate on the list.

Motion was made by Commissioner Jordan and duly seconded by Commissioner McDow to recess until 6 p.m. June 1, 2005 in the Commissioners Chamber. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann W. Kurtzman
Clerk

J.D. Willis
Chairman

Anne G. Tindall